Machiavelli’s contribution to the concept of idealism

**Bibliography on Plato’s idealism**

The Greek philosopher Plato founded the concept of idealism. Plato believes that the world in which we live is ideally unreal. He explains that the actions of man are guided by a set of ideas that are usually dynamic with respect to one’s exposure. This concept emphasizes that ideas have a closer relationship with the mind than with the physical world itself. Plato goes ahead and explains the concept of idealism using the idea of moral goodness. He states that we may picture people as morally perfect but in a real sense, they are not morally perfect. He also uses concepts in geometry such as the properties of a circle to explain the concept of idealism. According to Foster Michael (1993) in his book *the political philosophies of Plato and Hegel,* his main argument is that the mind is the central link to each man’s physical aspect of life. Being a great contributor to the field of Philosophy, Plato’s concept has faced a lot of oppositions and falsifications, however a good number of scholars have demonstrated robust support for his ideology. This paper asserts to discuss the ways through which Machiavelli, a scholar in the same field has criticized Plato’s work of idealism.

**Machiavelli’s concept of virtue**

Plato believes in morality, and so, he believes in just leaders. On the other hand, Machiavelli believes in unjust leadership. He addresses the issue of principalities as he attempts to explain how the society is designed to maintain its leaders (Machiavelli, 1940). He over-emphasized the negative side of man and tells why it should not be ignored. He believes conflict and mistrust naturally characterize man, unlike Plato. Machiavelli robustly believes that man’s deviance and betrayal is entirely inevitable. He emphasizes the idea of virtue in every leader (Wren et al. 2004). He uses a prince to explain how leadership should be conducted, as well as what makes a leader popular. Plato argues that virtue is a skill and an unjust individual fails to demonstrate this skill. Machiavelli writes a letter to his friend Lorenzo Di Piero De Medici and incorporates the qualities of the leader he considers fit to rule a given prosperous society (Connell 2011).

**Individual versus society as the central focus**

While Plato’s concept addresses the needs of both the individual and the society, Machiavelli ignores the personal needs and focuses even more on the needs of the community. He claims that the society’s needs are of more significance than the individuals’ in pursuit, in this case, the leader. He advocates for the full elevation of operational attention to the eye of the society rather than to himself. He believes that the behavior of a leader should change depending on the situation (Cox et al. 1983). Plato, on the other hand, claims that a just leader should have one specific behavior which defines him, besides setting him apart from the external population. A leader is an integral part of the society, with a more significant role beyond individual needs (Machiavelli, 1940). In support of his idea of leadership, Plato argues that leaders should be fair and should avoid evil at all cost. He further draws the permeable line between justice and evil by claiming that justice involves the ultimate nurturing of evil.

**How Machiavelli’s work can be considered as a novel**

Machiavelli’s ideas in philosophy can be classified as a novel in some ways. For a social scientific concept to be classified as professional work, it has to be criticized through researched evidence. Plato has always been referred to as the father of idealism since his time in the ancient society. According to Newell (1987), in the journal *How Original Is Machiavelli*, he came up with his concepts of leadership which greatly opposed Plato’s works. His ideas are stated through a researched procedure, making it easy for a reader to derive meaning from them. Additionally, as much as Machiavelli’s ideas contradict Plato’s works, he has sensible and tangible arguments against Plato because his thoughts are established from the reliance on visible patterns in humanity reign trends. A reader who navigates through the works of Machiavelli stands a chance to argue even further and even provide criticisms to both the rivaling philosophers. Since humanity is dynamic and dependent upon rapidly changing factors such as technology, education among others. Not only is tolerance a dynamic feature but also a societal feature that impacts on the characteristics of a given society, thus the community at large is dynamic. It is evident enough that the works of Machiavelli should be considered a novel.

**How Machiavelli’s suggestions are altogether new**

The works of Machiavelli seem to take a different path from those of Plato and other philosophers. Machiavelli campaigns against just ruling and shows his undying over-emphasis on unjust leadership: leadership whereby the leader is justified to act how is expected to and not how he feels he should. He puts it out clearly that a leader should work in ways that will protect the rights of the majority. As seen, he has used the prince as a manual for the individuals who wish to pursue power in the society where they have previously dominated. He goes ahead and points out that leaders may come from a similar ethnical background but still be foes. Machiavelli believes that there are no friends when it comes to politics (Scott et al 2013). He goes ahead and advises how a leader can employ unfairness to win a battle to retain their leadership positions. This book gives an insight on how we should view our allies. It is normal for friends to trait their colleagues at times. He shapes the mind of individuals that while the world is seen not to be fair at all times, it is best for individuals to learn how not to be good at all times. The good virtues are taught in institutions, but they may not be practiced at all times for the reason of safeguarding order in a given society. In the modern world, the value of power is priceless, and most leaders will do everything in their abilities to maintain authority. They often choose their companions wisely to ensure that the needs of the community are left uncompromised. As much as Machiavelli may be teaching the world more of evil than good, his concepts are seen to apply in some individuals who have succeeded in maintaining their leadership titles, just like the prince mentioned in Machiavelli’s letter.

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